

Enabling Social Innovation in Republic of Moldova

Country Snapshot

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ¹

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Republic of Moldova's social innovation ecosystem.

✓ Direct focus on social innovation 🔗 Connected but indirect focus on social innovation ✗ No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Official Definition of Social Innovation 🔗

Public evidence does not indicate a single economy-wide official definition of social innovation. Moldova's clearest official language relates to social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and social insertion enterprises, defined in national legislation as tools to address social problems, improve living conditions, and support inclusion of disadvantaged groups ^{2,4}.

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

While there is no dedicated national social innovation authority, responsibilities are mainly held by the ministry responsible for economic development, which manages the social entrepreneurship framework and public registry, alongside the National Commission for Social Entrepreneurship; in the youth field, the Ministry of Education and Research hosts a Social Innovation Center ³⁻⁵.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While there is no standalone national strategy, relevant priorities appear in related frameworks. The National Program for Promoting Entrepreneurship and Enhancing Competitiveness 2023–2027 supports a more inclusive economy, while the Youth 2030 framework links support to youth social innovation and community development ^{5,6,7,8}.

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗

Moldova has an established legal basis for social entrepreneurship ²⁻⁴:

- The entrepreneurship law defines social enterprises and social insertion enterprises, including governance and social impact requirements ².
- At least 90% of profit must be reinvested in the social mission ².
- Social insertion enterprises must employ at least 30% disadvantaged individuals (also representing 30% of working time) ².
- The framework enables access to support measures including counselling, procurement participation, and state aid programmes ²⁻⁴.

Official Statistics 🔗

Dedicated statistics on social innovation are not identified. However, the ministry maintains an administrative registry of recognized social enterprises, providing a foundation for sector visibility and measurement ⁴.

Government Programs



Public support is most visible in youth and entrepreneurship programmes [5](#), [6](#), [20](#):

- The Social Innovation Center provides incubation support for youth organisations [5](#).
- The Youth Grants Programme funds social innovation and community projects (MDL 200,000–1,000,000 in 2024) [6](#).
- Authorities have also prepared a funding and mentoring programme for social enterprises, indicating continued policy interest [20](#).

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



The ecosystem includes public institutions, international organisations, civil society, and education actors [9-12](#):

- UNDP Moldova’s MiLab provides a platform for experimentation and public problem-solving [9](#).
- The public entrepreneurship agency supports social enterprise development [4](#), [20](#).
- Civil society actors such as East Europe Foundation and Keystone Moldova provide capacity building [10](#), [11](#).
- Education partnerships (e.g. JA Europe) link social entrepreneurship to youth skills development [12](#).

Support Initiatives



Support initiatives are diverse and expanding [5](#), [9](#), [10](#), [12](#):

- MiLab promotes collaborative innovation [9](#).
- The Social Innovation Center provides incubation support [5](#).
- Impact Space 2024–2028 supports social enterprises, including in underserved areas [10](#).
- School-based and youth initiatives create entry points for new innovators [12](#).

Collaboration



Collaboration is a strength across the ecosystem [3](#), [12](#), [20](#):

- Government, donors, civil society, and education actors collaborate through conferences and programme design [3](#), [20](#).
- Regional partnerships connect Moldova to wider learning networks [12](#), [20](#).

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Financing is developing through related instruments rather than a dedicated SI fund [6](#), [20-22](#):

- The Youth Grants Programme is a key public funding channel [6](#).
- A planned national funding and mentoring programme for social enterprises signals commitment [20](#).
- Additional funding includes environmental and civic innovation grants (e.g. up to US\$150,000 via GEF Small Grants Programme) [22](#).

Financing Inclusivity



Inclusivity is evident across schemes [6](#), [21](#):

- Youth funding prioritises disadvantaged groups, minorities, NEET youth, and underserved regions [6](#).
- Public programmes also support women entrepreneurs [21](#).

Overall, funding shows attention to inclusion, even where not explicitly labelled as social innovation [6](#), [21](#).

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation



Awareness is emerging through policy discourse, programmes, and research ^{4,5,11,20}. Understanding of social entrepreneurship remains uneven, suggesting scope for further awareness-building ¹¹.

Research



Research is growing, with national studies analysing challenges and opportunities in social entrepreneurship ^{11,23}.

Education & Human Capital



Education is a key entry point ^{5,12}:

- The Social Innovation Center supports youth capacity building ⁵.
- Social entrepreneurship is included as an optional subject in curricula through partnerships ¹².

Entrepreneurship

The broader entrepreneurship environment shows moderate enabling conditions ^{13 - 15}:



Business Environment

Starting a business takes ~7 days and costs ~1% of GNI per capita ¹⁴.



Innovation Capacity

Global Innovation Index 2025 ¹³



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

No Moldova-specific GEM data was identified, indicating a gap in measurement ¹⁵

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Moldova's civic and sustainability context provides relevant foundations ^{16 - 19}:



Solidarity

ND-GAIN ranking (74) indicates a climate resilience agenda ¹⁹



Political participation

Voter turnout in the 2025 parliamentary election was 52.2% ¹⁷



Volunteering

25% of the population reported volunteering in 2024 ¹⁶



Sustainability

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024